

like, so after 3 days of consideration last week the bill has not moved forward. It looks as though the same trick is going on right now. Since there is an open amendment process—and that is the way Senator McCONNELL runs the Senate—we have naturally suggested that they offer an amendment if they don't like something in this bill. They have refused to do so, and instead are holding up the entire bill from being amended and finally passed.

So after opening the bill up to amendments and having considered the bill for a week, the majority leader has now filed cloture. I want to be clear what this means. Again, a vote against cloture is a vote to continue debate and consider amendments. I have voted against ending debate many times in recent years out of principle when Senators were being denied their right to offer amendments. No one can say this is the case right now on this human trafficking bill. We have had a week of debate, and it is the minority party that is blocking amendments.

Remember that many Members of the now minority party, when they were in the majority, were adamant that a vote against cloture is a filibuster and that it is illegitimate to filibuster. I say to my colleagues, if they truly believe filibusters are wrong and it was not just cynical political posturing, then you had better vote for cloture tomorrow.

I will also note that a couple of Senators sent out a "Dear Colleague" letter at the beginning of this Congress calling again for what they term the "talking filibuster." By this, those Senators mean that if you vote against ending debate, you should be prepared to talk nonstop on the Senate floor. Under their proposal, as soon as there are no Senators talking on the Senate floor, the Senate would move to a final vote. The problem with this idea under the previous leadership was that amendments were routinely blocked so it meant Senators would have to talk nonstop to preserve their right to offer an amendment with no guarantee they would ever get the chance. That is not the issue this time.

We have allowed an open amendment process, and it is the minority party that is blocking amendments. So I would say to all the advocates of the so-called talking filibuster, if you do vote against cloture, you are saying you want to debate this bill more before a vote is taken. In that case, you better put your money where your mouth is.

To all of my colleagues who support this so-called filibuster and vote against this cloture motion, I expect to see you come down to the Senate floor and talk nonstop. You can use the time to explain to the American people why you object to moving forward with this very important bipartisan legislation to combat sex trafficking. Then when you are ready to move forward with the vote, let us know.

I yield the floor.

## EXECUTIVE SESSION

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NOMINATION OF CARLOS A. MONJE, JR., TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION

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NOMINATION OF MANSON K. BROWN TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF COMMERCE

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The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nominations of Carlos A. Monje, Jr., of Louisiana, to be an Assistant Secretary of Transportation; and Manson K. Brown, of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Commerce.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COATS). Under the previous order, there will be 30 minutes of debate equally divided in the usual form.

The Senator from Florida.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I would like to speak on the confirmation of both nominees, but first of all, I want to render a courtesy to the Senator from Connecticut—if he needs to complete his statement, I will yield to him and he can ask it in the form of a question.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. I want to express my appreciation to the Senator from Florida, whose model I am seeking to follow not only in expertise but also in graciousness and generosity.

It appears to me that we are in the midst of yet again considering nominations, so I would ask the Senator from Florida whether in his view his speaking now and our voting now on these nominations will detract in any way from the Senate's consideration of the trafficking bill and whether our voting on Loretta Lynch would in any way detract from our consideration of the trafficking bill.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, my response to the Senator is that, just as with the two nominees we will favorably consider today, which have been bipartisan, with the great support of Senator THUNE, the chairman of the Commerce Committee—those are not going to interfere with the trafficking bill. So, too, the President's choice—which came overwhelmingly out of the Committee on the Judiciary—for Attorney General likewise would not in any way hinder the trafficking bill if, in fact, we could get up the nominee, because the votes would obviously be there. So my answer to the Senator is that clearly it would not hinder the trafficking bill.

Mr. President, I rise in support of the confirmation of two public servants into leadership roles at NOAA—the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration—and the Department of Transportation. One is Admiral Manson Brown. Admiral Brown has served

our country with distinction for over 30 years, most recently as an officer in the U.S. Coast Guard. What made him successful in the Coast Guard is going to be put to great use as Assistant Secretary for Environmental Observation and Prediction at NOAA. Hurricane season is right around the corner. His position is going to provide crucial guidance and accountability if that big storm starts swirling in a counterclockwise fashion headed to the mainland. So I, this Senator from Florida, am particularly appreciative of Senator THUNE for helping expedite this confirmation.

This role will also oversee continued efforts to modernize NOAA. Now we are frequently launching up-to-date best technology weather satellites. NASA builds them, NASA launches them, and NOAA operates them. They are critical in giving us the refined capability to determine the ferociousness of a storm and its track.

As a highly regarded officer, Admiral Brown has honed significant expertise in his leadership in the Coast Guard maritime stewardship, safety, and national security. He is an engineer.

In our Senate Commerce Committee, we hold Admiral Brown in such high regard that we have reported his nomination favorably twice—once last Congress and again during our very first markup—and it was unanimous.

The second nominee is Mr. Carlos Monje, an Assistant Secretary for Policy. He will play a major, important role in shaping national transportation policy and priorities.

The Department of Transportation, for example, plays a critical role in helping ensure safety in the airspace as well as protecting consumers.

Last Friday, since I did not go back to my State, I went with the FAA Administrator to the Next Generation air traffic control modernization to see progress that is being made in the FAA research and development center at the Atlantic City Airport. NextGen capitalizes on existing technologies, such as the GPS capability provided by the Department of Defense satellite network, and what it will do is make our air traffic control system safer and more efficient.

How that works is right now we have a series of radars, and if it is an up-to-date radar, it will go around every 20 seconds. So you know where the airplane was, but you don't know where it is for the next 20 seconds—until the radar comes back around. If it is where it should be, it is in the path that was filed by the crew.

The next generation of air traffic control will track that aircraft from satellites, so there will be a continuous feed of data from the aircraft to the satellites, back to the controllers on the ground. Because of that, they can space aircraft closer, and they can give them a direct route into the airport instead of a lot of the circular patterns they have because of the delay in the continuous tracking. As a result, they

can save a lot of money for the airlines because they can be more fuel efficient, instead of the present step system—if you own an airliner and you are going into an airport, you are going to go through a series of steps. Air traffic control is going to tell you to descend to such-and-such at such-and-such heading, and you are going to go there. All of this continuous conversation is going on and having to be acknowledged by the cockpit crew until they tell you to descend to the next step down.

What the new Next Generation system will do is it will eliminate that step system because there will be a continuous feed. It will eliminate a lot of the human conversation, some of which gets misunderstood, because all of that continuous communication will be between the air traffic controller and the aircraft via communication of satellite. As a result, they will be able to give an aircraft a direct route—not through steps, not all that conversation—of descent into the airport, saving a lot of potential mistakes in human communication as well as saving a lot of fuel instead of having to power up and power down as the aircraft goes through each of those steps. Implementing the Next Generation air traffic control modernization is going to be just one of the many transportation policy challenges that we will face and that we are developing and that we have already implemented on a trial basis in a couple of airports and in some airplanes.

The Department of Transportation also plays a critical role in ensuring vehicle safety through its National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. And, of course, you have been reading the stories there—brakes that don't work, ignition switches that accidentally turn off when jostled by key chains, and now deadly airbag failures that cause the steering wheel containing an airbag to be a lethal weapon because it is faulty and it shreds metal in the explosion. We have had five deaths in this country alone that have already been reported.

So these nominees are assuming extremely important roles in the U.S. Government. I think the way Senator THUNE has handled these nominees as our chairman in the Commerce Committee has been admirable, and I thank him for the bipartisanship he has shown. We commend to the Senate these two nominees who will be voted on at 5:30.

Mr. GRASSLEY addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, will the kind Senator from Iowa yield for one request? I neglected to say something earlier.

Mr. GRASSLEY. I will.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Iowa. He is very kind.

Our former colleague, Senator Landrieu, is in the Gallery in order to see

the confirmation vote of Carlos Monje, who is from her State of Louisiana.

I thank the Senator from Iowa.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

(The remarks of Mr. GRASSLEY are printed in today's RECORD during consideration of S. 178.)

Mr. GRASSLEY. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I yield back all of our remaining time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

All time is yielded back.

#### VOTE ON MONJE NOMINATION

Under the previous order, the question occurs on the Monje nomination.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Carlos A. Monje, Jr., of Louisiana, to be an Assistant Secretary of Transportation?

Mr. GRASSLEY. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK), and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) is necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 94, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 71 Ex.]

#### YEAS—94

|            |            |           |
|------------|------------|-----------|
| Alexander  | Durbin     | McConnell |
| Ayotte     | Enzi       | Menendez  |
| Baldwin    | Ernst      | Merkley   |
| Barrasso   | Feinstein  | Mikulski  |
| Bennet     | Fischer    | Moran     |
| Blumenthal | Franken    | Murkowski |
| Blunt      | Gardner    | Murphy    |
| Booker     | Gillibrand | Murray    |
| Boozman    | Grassley   | Nelson    |
| Boxer      | Hatch      | Paul      |
| Brown      | Heinrich   | Perdue    |
| Burr       | Heitkamp   | Peters    |
| Cantwell   | Heller     | Portman   |
| Capito     | Hirono     | Reed      |
| Cardin     | Hoeven     | Reid      |
| Carper     | Inhofe     | Risch     |
| Casey      | Isakson    | Roberts   |
| Cassidy    | Johnson    | Rounds    |
| Coats      | Kaine      | Rubio     |
| Cochran    | King       | Sasse     |
| Collins    | Klobuchar  | Schatz    |
| Coons      | Lankford   | Schumer   |
| Corker     | Leahy      | Scott     |
| Cornyn     | Lee        | Sessions  |
| Cotton     | Manchin    | Shaheen   |
| Crapo      | Markey     | Shelby    |
| Daines     | McCain     | Stabenow  |
| Donnelly   | McCaskill  | Sullivan  |

|        |            |        |
|--------|------------|--------|
| Tester | Udall      | Wicker |
| Thune  | Warner     | Wyden  |
| Tillis | Warren     |        |
| Toomey | Whitehouse |        |

#### NOT VOTING—6

|       |        |         |
|-------|--------|---------|
| Cruz  | Graham | Sanders |
| Flake | Kirk   | Vitter  |

The nomination was confirmed.

#### VOTE ON BROWN NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Manson K. Brown, of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Commerce?

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motions to reconsider are considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's actions.

#### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume legislative session.

The majority leader.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### TRIBUTE TO DR. MICHAEL COLEGROVE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise to recognize a great Kentuckian who has recently received a great honor. Dr. Michael Colegrove, who has been employed with the University of the Cumberlands in various capacities over the last 40 years and is currently the vice president for student services and the director of leadership studies, recently received the Tri-County 2015 Leader of the Year award from the Leadership Tri-County organization in Kentucky.

Leadership Tri-County focuses on civic, business, and community leadership in Laurel, Knox, and Whitley Counties in southeastern Kentucky. A nonprofit organization founded in 1987, it identifies potential, emerging, and current leaders from the three counties and nurtures their continued development.

Dr. Colegrove graduated from Cumberland College, currently known as the University of the Cumberlands, in 1971. In addition to working for the school for 40 years, he spent 30 years in the U.S. Army Reserve and retired with the rank of colonel in 2003. Dr. Colegrove earned a master of arts from Eastern Kentucky University and a doctor of philosophy from Vanderbilt University. He is also a graduate of the U.S. War College.